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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [PINR](#) [AR](#)
SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: NATIONAL DEPUTIES PLAN TRAVEL TO
WASHINGTON IN MAY

REF: BUENOS AIRES 0315

Classified By: Ambassador Wayne for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

¶11. (SBU) Summary: The Ambassador met March 19 with congressional deputy Ruperto Godoy, chairman of the Argentine Lower House's Foreign Relations Committee, to discuss plans to lead a multipartisan delegation of seven national deputies to Washington in May. Godoy stressed that they are committed to traveling soon to the United States, despite the sudden onset of legislative elections, which are being moved up four months to June 28. Five of the deputies in the delegation will seek reelection this year, but not Godoy. We are pleased and slightly surprised by Deputy Godoy's commitment to the trip. It suggests to us that Argentine deputies are eager to start relations off on the right foot under President Obama's administration and that they perceive benefits to associating with the United States. End Summary.

¶12. (SBU) The Ambassador met March 19 with ruling Victory Front (FpV) national congressional deputy Ruperto Godoy, chairman of the Argentine Lower House's Foreign Relations Committee, to discuss plans to lead a multipartisan delegation of seven national deputies to Washington the week of May 15. Godoy, who represents San Juan province, said he will be accompanied by Lower House First Vice President Patricia Vaca Narvaja (FpV from Cordoba); FpV bloc leader Agustin Rossi (from Santa Fe); and national deputies Federico Pinedo (head of the center-right Republican Proposal, PRO, Party led by Buenos Aires Mayor Macri); Pedro Azcoiti (Radical (UCR) from Buenos Aires province); Fernando Sanchez (Civic Coalition (CC) from Buenos Aires city); and Carlos Raimundi (Solidarity and Equality from Buenos Aires province). Godoy stressed that they are committed to traveling soon to the United States, despite the government's decision to move up by four months this year's legislative elections from October 25 to June 28. (Note: Deputies Rossi, Vaca Narvaja, Sanchez, Azcoiti, and Raimundi will be seeking reelection this year. End note.) Godoy said he hoped such a trip would strengthen bilateral relations and expressed interest in discussing an expanded bilateral agenda to include the environment, in particular climate change, and economic issues, including food production. Godoy said he hoped the trip would increase future bilateral visits and enable the creation of a bilateral congressional commission. The Ambassador offered Embassy support for the trip.

On CFK's Bill to Move up the Legislative Elections

¶13. (C) Deputy Godoy defended the President's decision to move the legislative elections to June. He explained that the current electoral timeline of a series of provincial elections prior to October threatened to draw out the politicking at a time of crisis when the leadership needed to focus on policy. The Ambassador observed that the date for congressional elections in the United States has not changed

since 1875. Godoy replied that such stability is ideal but, given the current situation, moving the election date seems to be the best course of action. He anticipated the bill would pass in the Senate.

¶4. (C) Godoy commented that it is difficult to govern Argentina, given the country's tendency to be in a constant state of crisis. Nonetheless, he emphasized Argentina has always had a "democratic exit" from such crises. He noted that Argentina's opposition parties have not yet become "institutionalized," adding that should Buenos Aires City Mayor Mauricio Macri leave PRO, the party he founded, it would cease to exist.

On the Region

¶5. (SBU) Godoy relayed that on March 16 and 17 he attended the Mercosur parliament, where he heard member countries express concern about the economic crisis. He added that Europe's deepening recession has hurt Latin America by reducing consumer demand, remarking that now the crisis is impacting the real economy. The Ambassador observed that in many countries the coming months will be tougher economically. From a regional perspective, Godoy described Chile, Uruguay, and Brazil as stable, while he expressed concern about Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela.

Bio Note

¶6. (SBU) Godoy's close relations with the Kirchners helped him secure his position as chairman of the influential foreign relations committee. Godoy also serves on the education, agriculture, finance, housing, and internal security committees. Godoy served two terms as a provincial legislator in San Juan (1995-1999 and 1987-1991), was Secretary of Government in San Juan province (1991-1992), and an adviser to the San Juan City Council (1983-1985). Besides his political activities, Godoy has been an agricultural producer since 1992. Nonetheless, despite this background, Godoy sided with the Kirchners during their six-month conflict with the farm sector in 2008. Born on March 13, 1953 in San Juan province, Godoy is married and has three children.

¶7. (C) Comment: We are pleased and slightly surprised by Deputy Godoy's expressed commitment to conducting this trip now, considering the sudden onset of a shortened electoral season. It suggests to us that Argentine deputies are eager to start relations off on the right foot under President Obama's administration, and perhaps that official travel to the United States is now viewed as a political asset.

WAYNE